Course Description: This intensive writing workshop focuses on literary nonfiction, exploring the ways in which the contemporary essay has addressed issues of voice, scene, point of view, style, and theme. Readings will mostly be drawn from pieces of contemporary nonfiction. These will serve as the basis for discussing the art and craft of creative prose. They will also offer us springboards for our own writing. Because we are visitors in Ireland, we will focus on creative writing about place. We will explore nonfiction techniques for travel narratives and personal essays on the kinds of “difference” such journeys and dislocations incite in the writer, as well as those unexpected responses and interactions the writer inspires in the people they meet who call Dublin home.

Texts are all online, with selections from: Brenda Miller and Susanne Antonetta, *Tell it Slant: Creating, Refining and Publishing Creative Nonfiction* (2012); James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son* (1955); Lauren Quinn, “Mr. Nhem’s Genocide Camera” (2014); ; Pico Iyer, *Autumn Light* (2019); and others.

**Please note this:** The following schedule of readings and assignments is subject to change. It is your responsibility to note the adjustments to it that I make as we proceed.

Schedule of Class Meetings and Assignments

June 11-15 Arrivals, Orientation, and Exploring the City

Week 1 (June 19):

M: Readings: Miller, “The Workshop” and handouts “Staging the Workshop”; ”Workshop guidelines 2022”; Miller, “Taking Place”; Quinn, “Mr. Nhem’s Genocide Camera” from *The Believer* (click the close box at the prompt to subscribe to *The Believer*). Also Read Prompt 1: Memory, Sense Place (due by 5:00 p.m. Tuesday)
T: Read handout "Scene and Exposition—Terms, Tricks"; Miller, “Scene and Exposition—From Tell it Slant”; selection from Pico Iyer, *Autumn Light*.
W: Workshop Prompt 1; Read Prompt 2: Scene and Exposition (due for Monday workshop).

Week 2 (June 26):

M: Workshop Prompt 2: Scene and Exposition.
T: Read “Frames/Source/Strategies”; Foster Wallace “Consider the Lobster”
W: Read Hakala “Jumping the Fence.” Research Map due by 5:00 p.m. Wednesday. Prompt 3: Research, Facts, and Sources (due for Monday workshop).

Week 3 (July 3):

M: Workshop Prompt 3: Research, Facts, and Sources
T: Baldwin, "Stranger in the Village"


Week 4 (July 10):

M: Workshop Prompt 4: Voice and Structure
T: Miller, "The Basics of Good Writing in any form"; McPhee, “The Orange Trapper”

*Complete draft due Saturday

Week 5 (July 17):

M: Workshop
T: Workshop
W: Workshop

Final Project due Friday, July 21

Session Details: Class meets three times a week. The workshop lasts two hours with a brief break and will include craft-based discussions of readings as well as student work. Students will read other class members’ work with attention, give short written and verbal assessment of all work, and be prepared both to give and receive constructive criticism. The syllabus may change to reflect new events and opportunities, so always stay abreast of the ICON website for the latest version and other announcements.

Discussion: Each student will upload comments on all workshop writing in their groups and on course readings as assigned by the instructor.

AI: If you choose to use AI to help you with your writing assignments for this class, you must provide a file of any AI-generated materials and cite those materials as you would any other source. Unattributed use of AI-generated materials will be treated as plagiarism.

In-class writing: As time allows, we may do some brief extemporaneous in-class writing exercises to practice the craft of nonfiction writing.

Writing Prompts 1-4: On Wednesdays, students will be assigned a prompt for a short (500-word) piece of writing to be completed and posted to ICON by the following Sunday. These will be the basis for our workshops, and can build toward the final project. They should be written specifically for this class, or if you have a pre-existing project that you’re hoping to work with, you should revise it extensively according to the prompts I give you -- for example, focusing on exposition and scene, or augmenting a section using the research techniques we use, etc.

Portfolio: You will gather your short writing assignments (in-class writing and writing prompts 1-4) into a portfolio for part of your final grade. This portfolio should include a brief reflection (1 page) on what you achieved and learned through these pieces of writing. The reflection can highlight works of which you are particularly proud, works that caused you extra struggle, or works that you identify as turning points in your writing or technique.

Creative essay project: This final project should be an eight-paged (double-spaced), polished and thoughtful work of narrative prose that reflects some aspect of your time and experience in Ireland. We will workshop drafts of these pieces intensively during the final week, and a polished, revised version will be submitted on Friday of that week.

Attendance: You are required to attend every class and all excursions. Illnesses or emergencies are the only excused absences. Having more than one excused absence, and any unexcused ones at all, will result in a lowered final grade.
**Participation:** Come to each class having read the day’s assignment; be prepared to listen, ask questions, and help make sense of the readings. Workshop is a no-phone zone and I consider paying attention to your phone instead of your peers to be equivalent to an unexcused absence.

**Excursions:** Excursions in and beyond Dublin may be integrated into our schedule as time allows.

**Grading:** Students are graded on their writing, their responses to peer work, and their participation in the workshop. Attendance at all workshops is mandatory and absence as well as lateness is considered when the grade is assigned. Failing to submit a paper may result in an F grade. I grade work based not only on quality, but also on effort and improvement that shows the conscious application of workshop advice, attention to technique, and creative revision. Grading percentages: final project 60%; portfolio 20%; participation 20%